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Bulletin Editor

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EDITORIAL

On behalf of the Council and the Editorial Committee of the OST we must apologise that yet again we cannot announce the publication of the 1970/71 report. The missing section of the report was only received in early September and is now being processed.

As a result of this prolonged delay it has been decided that the 1972/73 report which is already underway should be combined with the 1970/71 report to produce an enlarged four year report which we hope will be available in the near future. It is felt that the four year report will both reduce costs and be more comprehensive than two smaller reports published within a short time of each other.

This bulletin contains an article on some of the more recent records of interest by Richard Porter, as well as news of flamingo ringing reccveries in Turkey and further correspondence on the question of the Greater Rock Nuthatch Sitta tephronota in Turkey.

Lastly we were particularly pleased to hear that Mr. Nihat Turan and Mr. Tansu Gurpinar of the Hunting & Fishing Section of the General Directorate of Forestry would be attending as delegates at the "Conference on the preservation of waterfowl and their habitat" to be held in Heiligenhafen, West Germany in December.

RECENT REPORTS FROM TURKEY

by Richard Porter

These are largely unchecked and should not be taken as authenticated records.

WINTER WILDFOWL COUNTS

Once again Fred Koning and Liewe Dijksen (Netherlands) carried out the I.W.R.B. wildfowl counts in Turkey this year making them during the second half of February, whereas in previous years the surveys have been in November, December and January. In these mid-winter months the Turkish wetlands selected for counting hold 600,000 to 1,400,000 wildfowl and coots, but the 1974 February counts produced a mere 153,000. From these figures Koning and Dijksen rightly **deduced** that counts in February are too late in the year to obtain reliable information about the wildlife population.

The following table shows the numbers of Anatidae and Coots counted on the 38 Wetlands in Turkey in February 1974. Those selected for counting were those usually holding a wintering population of more than 5,000 birds though unfortunately the Meric Delta could not be visited. In order to compare the figures the totals for the 1971 January counts are also given.

	February 1974	January 1971
Anas platyrhynchos	3.750	67.285
Anas crecca	18.076	99.145
Anas querquedula	37	
Anas angustirostris	-	617
Anas strepera	468	4.466
Anas penelope	12.919	107.858
Anas acuta	25.500	47.678
Anas clypeata	9,092	5.400
Netta rufina	2.353	5.424
Aythya fuligula	4.987	20.417
Aythya ferina	6.720	37.492
Aythya nyroca	-	97
Bucephala clangula	3	10
Mergus albellus	-	153
Mergus serrator	-	1
Mergus merganser	-	5
Oxyura lecocephala	5.740	6.028
Tadorna tadorna	503	1.517
Casarca feruginea	872	2.270
Anser anser	776	8.750
Anser albifrons	5.735	87.966
Anser spec.	-	150
Cygnus olor	45	210
Cygnus cygnus	26	-
Cygnus spec.	5	-
Fulica atra	41.794	407.231
Unidentified ducks	15.300	-
Unidentified ducks/coot	2.180	48.860
	153.189	973.059

Amongst other species of interest seen by Koning and Dijksen during February were : Black-throated Diver Gavia artica on the Black Sea Coast but no signs of Red-throated Diver Gavia stellata. Black-necked Grebes Podiceps nigricollis were well down in number and the only gathering of more than 100 was at Burdur where there were 1,770 on 25th February, whilst on the 24th at Izmir T. B. Mitford said "across the harbour, from close in to the limit of binocular vision, the water was dotted with these birds". The largest congregation of Great Crested Grebes Podiceps cristatus was 880 on Kucuk Cekmece on 4th March.

Winter raptors, waders and gulls

Among the raptors, two Rough-legged Buzzards Buteo lagopus were seen at Balik Golu in mid February, whilst on the 27th at Isikli Golu in Western Anatolia 8 Spotted Eagles Aquila clanga, 4 Imperials A.heliaca, 6 Long-legged Buzzards Buteo rufinus, 3 Griffons Gyps fulvus and 2 Merlins Falco columbarius were seen. This last species seemed to be well distributed in small numbers with up to 6 at Hotamis on 20th February.

Cranes Grus grus were in rather small numbers - only about 550 being counted in groups of up to 140.

Of wader haunts in February, Akyatan Golu in the southern coastlands was probably the most interesting. On 18th February the following were among the species counted : 258 Kentish Plovers Charadrius alexandrinus, 4 Dotterel Eudromias morinellus, 24 Grey Plover Pluvialis squatorola, 44 Little Stints Calidris minuta, 2,755 Dunlins Calidris alpina, 125 Avocets Recurvirostra avosetta. There were good counts of Ruff Philomachus pugnax, with 6,850 at Hotamis on 20th February, and Black-tailed Godwit Limosa limosa which totalled about 2,200, the largest number being 720 at the Menderes Delta on 28th. A Great Black-headed Gull Larus ichthyaetus at Balik G. on 15th February was probably the rarest bird seen on their February visit. Only two or three have been seen in Turkey in the last eight years.

The first of the spring migrants

Migrants returning from their wintering grounds in Africa were in evidence during the month. The first Garganey Anas querquedula were seen at Marmara Golu on 27th February whilst the first flock of White storks Ciconia ciconia totalling some 75 birds appeared at Hotamis on 20th. At Apolyont Golu, 41 Night Herons Nycticorax nycticorax were seen on 2nd March.

Swallows Hirundo rustica were seen in the delta's of the Seyhan/Ceyhan, Goksu and Menderes on the 18th, 19th and 28th; on that last date the first Sand Martins Riparia riparia and House Martins Delichon urbica as well as a freshly dead Great Spotted Cuckoo Clamator glandarius were seen at the Menderes.

Just one Eagle Owl

M. J. Ingram (England) had a single Eagle Owl Bubo bubo at Sivrihisar on the Central Plateau on 5th January whilst on a short wildfowling trip. This was the only record for the winter months, Koning and Dijksen not seeing any on their February visit.

March and early April

At the end of March and early April M. C. Jennings (England) spent a few days in the Iskendurum/Amik area, later moving on to Birecik. He writes

> "The passerine migration, except for Swifts Apus apus and hirundines had hardly started in the south near Iskenderum in late March and the first three days of April. However 1,700 White Storks, 100 White Pelicans Pelacanus onocrotalus and 350 raptors (mostly buzzards Buteo buteo) passed north in four days even though the weather conditions were poor for soaring. Nearby in the hills at Belen a continuous light stream of Phylloscopus warblers, Tree Pipits Anthus trivialis and a Wall Creeper Tichodroma muraria were found going north in a pass at 2,500 ft.
>
> The Western side of Amik Golu was visited on 28th March. A system of wide irrigation ditches and deep ploughing has reduced, I estimate, at least half of the lake to a flat damp area of agricultural and rough grazing. Only on some waterlogged areas were there a few waders and wildfowl.
>
> When I first looked out at 0530 on 30th March at Birecik I counted 16 Bald Ibis leaving the colony together and 29 remairing on the ledges. If some birds had left earlier then I might guardedly suggest that there are perhaps 25+ pairs this year - the official figures are awaited. It was encouraging to see the birds taking so readily to the artificial nesting ledges provided by the World Wildlife Fund and nice to see the local people so obviously proud of their special birds".

Southern Turkey - Alanya area in April

A ten day visit by R. H. Casson (England) showed the Alanya marshes to be quite interesting for migrant herons, including Glossy Ibises Plegadis falcinellus. A Little Crake Pozarna parva, no doubt a migrant too, was also seen. A number of species of wader were recorded too and this area would repay further study in both spring and autumn.

May

A "Bird and Flower Tour" lead by M. H. Rowntree from May 8 - 22, 1974 visited the S. Coastlands (Side, Perge Aspendos, Termessus), the inland area around Burdur-Acigöl-Pamukkale, the S.W. coast and Menderes delta area, and Cappadocia (Nevsehir-Göreme). About 150 species were seen.

The peak of migration was past, but from May 8 - 11 at Side, Swallows Hirundo rustica, Swifts Apus apus, Turtle Doves Streptopelia turtur, and Short-toed Larks Calandrella cinerea were still passing westwards along the coast in fair numbers in the early morning. The Side area produced an Olive-tree Warbler Hippolais olivetorum as well as plentiful Black-headed Buntings Emberiza melanocephala, Red-backed Shrikes Lanius collurio, Rufous Bush Chats Cercotrichas galactotes and Bee Eaters Merops apiaster.

The wooded hills and ravines among the ruins of Termessus provided, among other delights, Collared Flycatcher Ficedula albicollis, Bonelli's Warbler Phylloscopus bonelli, Middle Spotted Woodpecker Dendrocopus media, Golden Oriole Oriolus oriolus and Sombre Tit Parus lugubris.

The journey across the two Taurus passes of Cubuk and Celtikci produced White-throated Robins Irania gutturalis, Finsch's Wheatear Oenanthe finschii and Blue Rock Thrush Monticola solitarius - all quite common.

At Acigöl a pair of Cranes Grus grus were watched dancing and mating among Black-winged Stilts Himantopus himantopus, Ruffs Philomachus pugnax, and Ruddy Shelducks Tadorna ferruginea.

The hills behind Pamukkale produced perhaps the most interesting birds of the tour - among the numerous Cretzchmar's Buntings Emberiza caesia was a male Cinereous bunting Emberiza cineracea, which gave excellent views while singing beside a gorge; no female was seen, but the behaviour suggested breeding.

At Bafa G. 2 Red-throated Pipits Anthus cervinus were on passage, and a single Cattle Egret Bubulcus ibis was feeding with a number of Little Egrets Egretta garzetta and Squacco Herons Ardeola ralloides. The Menderes marshes had breeding Penduline Tits Remiz pendulinus, and a few Pratincoles Glareola pratincola.

In Cappadocia, an unprepossessing looking area at Nevsehir produced Great Spotted Cuckoo Clamator glandarius, Masked Shrike Lanius nubicus, Tree Sparrow Passer montanus, and Redstart P.phoenicurus samamiscus with their white wing patches, as well as plentiful Nightingales Luscinia megarhynchos in song.

Raptors were disappointingly scarce - a sign of the times?! No Black Kites Milvus migrans were seen outside of Istanbul. Long legged Buzzard Buteo rufinus, Golden Eagle Aquila chrysaetos, Egyptian Neophron percnopterus and Griffon Vulture Gyps fulvus, Short-toed Eagle Circaetus gallicus, Hobby Falco subbuteo, and Common Falco tinnunculus and Lesser Kestrels Falco naumanni were all seen, but, except for the last species, only in small numbers.

The summer records

From the 18th May to 9th June Thomas Ennis, Charles Carson (N. Ireland) and two companions journeyed across the Central Plateau through the Taurus and down in the south east to Urfa. Rosy Starlings Sternus roseus were seen on the move across the Plateau and at 11,000ft. in the Taurus. Where do these migrant starlings nest? The climb up Demirkazik near Camardi was highly rewarding with about 10 Caspian Snowcocks Tetraogallus caspius, Wall Creeper Tichodroma muraria, several pairs of both Alpine Accentor Prunella collaris, Radde's Accentor Prunella ocuroris, hordes of Snow Finches Montifinjilla nivelis and Shore Larks Eremophila alpestria.

In the valley from Camardi to Pozanti a group of some 15 "Crag Martins" were observed. Prolonged study showed that they had no dark on the chin - Pale Crag Martin Hirundo obsoleta? Future observers to this area should keep a look-out.

In the gardens around Urfa several pairs of Menetries Warblers Sylvia mystacea were seen and also a pair of Upchers Warblers Hippolais languida, whilst See-See Partridge Ammoperdix griseogularis was observed at Vinensehir.

And the last trip of the summer by M. J. Helps and P. Clements (England) concentrated on the eastern Pontic Mountains between the 25th June to 14th July.

In the high mountain passes north east of Ardahan 2 pairs of Black Woodpeckers Dendrocopus martius were found as well as about 40 Alpine Accentors Prunella collaris, Snow Finches Montifringilla nivalis and Red-fronted Serins Serinus pusillus.

In one of the valleys to the north of Erzurum, which was dense in cover Marsh Warblers Acrocephalus palustris, Bluethroats Luscinia svecica Collared Flycatcher Ficedula albicollis, Penduline Tit Remiz pendulinus, Whinchat Saxicola rubetra and Common Rosefinch Carpodacus erythrinus were all found breeding commonly.

Flamingo recoveries

Information received from Dr. D. A. Scott of the Iranian Department of Environmental Conservation in Tehran, shows that young Greater Flamingoes Pheonicopterus ruber, ringed as pulli on islands in Lake Razaiyeh, Azarbeijan, Iran move westwards to winter on the southern coast of Turkey.

Of the five recoveries received, all the birds were ringed as pulli in August in 1971/72/73 in Azarbeijan. The first was ringed on 6th August '71 and recovered near Elazig on 17th October the same year. Of two ringed on the 8th August '72, one was recovered on 10th December the same year near Antalya and the other on 6th January '74 near Silifke. Two ringed on 25th and 27th August '73 turned up on the seashore near Izmir on 7th January '74, and on 20th November '73 near Adana respectively.

Unfortunately the last four had all been shot. No details were available for the other.

Submission of Records

Because of the delay in the publication of the 1970/71 report and its combination with the 72/73 report, we are still in a position to accept any late records, previously not sent in, from 1970 onwards. Any material for this report should be sent in immediately. We would also be pleased to receive any 1974 records.

Records should be sent to the Editors, Ornithological Society of Turkey, c/o RSPB, The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire, England.

Records should be listed under species (not please under localities) and using only one side of a sheet. Species should be listed in the order used in the "Check List of the Birds of Turkey" (i.e. that used by C.Vaurie in the "Birds of the Palearctic Fauna".

Example layout

Sterna hirundo (J.D.R.V. - observers initials).

W. Anatolia (Region*) 18th July, 1972. Colony of 20 pairs. APOLYONT GOLU.

* A map showing the boundaries of the geographical regions of Turkey can be found in the "Check List".

A few copies of the 1968/69 Report are still available, price £1.60. (post free), also a few copies of the "Check List of the Birds of Turkey", price 55p. (post free) from OST, c/o RSPB, The Lodge, Sandy, Beds, England.

Nuthatches

The question of the Greater Rock Nuthatch Sitta tephronota breeding in Turkey is followed up by this letter received from M. P. Walters of the British Museum of Natural History at Tring, Herts, England.

"I have just been reading with great interest the account of the Greater Rock Nuthatch in the latest OST Bulletin, particularly the reference to Tristram, which I have looked up. One of the intrigueing things, however, is that we have in the Museum 4 eggs of "Sitta syriaca " which came from Tristram's collection; three of these were collected in Greece by Krüper, the other one in Smyrna, Turkey by Müller. These eggs are NOT the eggs of S.Tephronota, but quite obviously S.Neumayer of which S.Syriaca is of course now being regarded as a race. It casts a certain doubt in my mind as to whether Tristram had not got a bit confused, particularly as the eggs were certainly collected before he wrote his account in Ibis."

INFORMATION REQUIRED!

We have received the following requests for information and would be pleased to pass on any replies.

Black-headed Gulls(Larus ridibundus)

"I am preparing a work on the extension of the breeding range of the Black-headed Gull in Europe and Turkey. Information from the 66/67, 68/69, and 70/71 (in prep) Turkish Bird Reports has been supplied to me but I would be grateful if anyone with records of nesting Black-headed Gulls before 1966 or after 1971 could send them to me".

Paul Isenmann,
Centre D'Ecologie de Camargue,
Le Sambuc,
13200 Arles, France.

Raptor Migration

Bent Pors Nielsen and Steen Christensen are at present collecting data on raptor movements over the whole of the Middle East, in order to write a paper on the general raptor migration system in the area. All records in the OST reports have been supplied, but anyone with unpublished records of raptors in the Middle East is asked to get in touch with them.

Bent Pors Nielsen,
Hammershøj Cl,
Tuborgvej 181,
2400 Copenhagen NV,
Denmark.

BALIK GOLU

Balik Golu and the associated wetlands at the mouth of the Kizilirmak on Turkey's Black Sea Coastlands are under threat from drainage. The Society is anxious that all ornithological data on this area is collected and Martin Renkhoff has agreed to co-ordinate this. The Editors of the Turkish Bird Reports will be sending Mr. Renkhoff all records that have been submitted to the OST but if anyone has any unpublished data about this very important area would they please send it to

Martin Renkhoff,
D - 4421 Reken 4,
Mühlenweg 4,
W. Germany.

Illustrations by Ian Willis :

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